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MAXIMUM SPACE DEBRIS FROM PSLV ROCKETS, MOST IN LOW EARTH ORBIT

As of March, 129 space debris originating from Indian satellite missions are in orbit, mostly from PSLV rockets, Parliament was informed

BULLISH ON ZERO DEBRIS CREATION BY 2030

The management of space debris has become a concern. According to a written reply in Parliament by the Centre, the debris includes 23 defunct satellites in low earth orbit and 26 in geostationary orbit. In addition, there are rocket debris from PSLV (40), GSLV (4) and LVM3 (3). It is in this backdrop that India is aiming for zero debris creation by 2030

EXPERT STUDIES IN PLACE FOR MISSION

- As a step to achieve zero debris mission, ISRO has institutionalised the process to ensure extra fuel margins for both spacecraft and launch vehicles, during mission design and project initialisation phase
- Studies are being undertaken for robotic arm, rendezvous and proximity operations that are precursors to active debris removal | P7

35,000

TRACKABLE DEBRIS OBJECTS ARE CURRENTLY IN SPACE WORLDWIDE

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT
INCOME TAX ACT, 2025
applicable from
1st April 2026
Improved Clarity & Ease in Reading
CBC 15401/13/0017/2526
INCOME TAX ACT
2025
Powering the mission of Viksit Bharat
Simple Laws, Empowered Bharat
Towards Viksit Bharat
Through Simplified
Taxation Law
"Today the goal of the country is Viksit Bharat, Sashakt Bharat! We cannot stop until this dream of a developed India is fulfilled."
- Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Steepest single-day rupee dive in 4 years

Import costs may soar as currency falls 82 paise over Iran conflict

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @ Mumbai

THE rupee on Friday logged its steepest single-day decline in four years, closing at a record low of 93.71 against the dollar, down 82 paise, as escalating tensions in West Asia kept crude oil prices elevated.

The currency opened at 93.15 and remained under pressure through the session. During intraday trading, it weakened 1.1% to touch 93.7350 (down 103 paise), breaching its previous record low of 92.63 hit earlier this week. The rupee eventually settled at 93.71, marking a weekly decline of about 1.3%—the sharpest since late 2022.

With this, the rupee has earned the dubious distinction of being the worst-performing currency in Asia, depreciating over 5.5% so far this year.

Over the past year, the currency has weakened by around 8% against the dollar compared with an average annual fall of 4.2% in recent years. The continued slide poses risks to India's macroeconomic goals, including its ambition to become a $5-trillion economy.

A weaker rupee raises the cost of imports across the board, not just crude oil. India imports nearly 85% of its crude oil and over 60% of its natural gas requirements, making it particularly vulnerable to currency depreciation. According to RBI estimates, a $10 per barrel rise in crude prices typically pushes up inflation by about 30 basis points. Crude is currently trading above $110 per barrel.

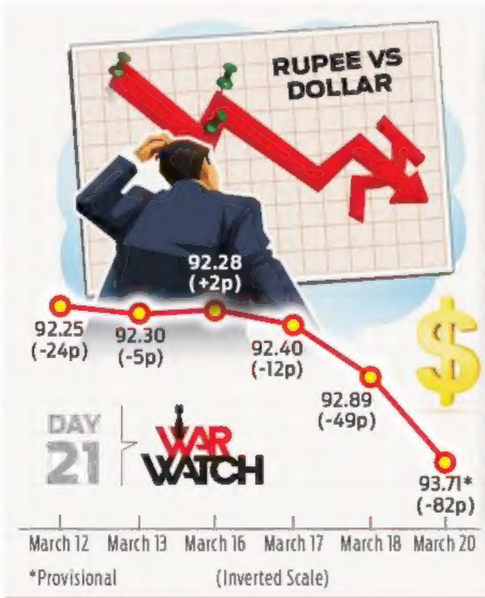
For the domestic economy, the impact of a prolonged conflict extends beyond currency weakness. The combination of a depreciating rupee and elevated crude prices could fuel imported inflation, especially in fuel and commodities, raise input costs for businesses, and increase the burden on consumers—prompting monetary policy action by RBI.

A sustained spike in oil prices could also dampen growth in one of the world's largest oil-importing economies.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have already pulled out over $8 billion from Indian equities this month—the highest outflow since January 2025—adding further pressure on the rupee. In 2025, FPIs had sold equities worth $18.9 billion.

Domestic equity markets, however, showed resilience. After a sharp fall of 3% on Thursday, benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty recovered modestly on Friday, rising 0.5%.

With Iran-US tensions simmering, concerns over crude supply disruptions are mounting. Officials in Saudi Arabia have warned that oil prices could touch $180 per barrel if the war goes on till late April, raising fears of a prolonged energy shock.



'Re may breach 95-mark'

With no signs of ease in the West Asia conflict, the rupee remains vulnerable. Several global brokerages, including Goldman Sachs and UBS, expect the Indian currency to weaken further and breach the 95-mark in the near term

PREMIUM PETROL, INDUSTRIAL DIESEL PRICES RAISED

The West Asia war has begun to affect petrol and diesel prices, with OMCs raising premium petrol prices by up to ₹2.35 per litre from Friday. The latest hike applies only to premium variants such as BPCL's Speed, HPCL's Power fuel and Indian Oil's XP95, while regular petrol prices remain unchanged. OMCs have also raised bulk diesel prices for industrial users by ₹22 per litre. In Delhi, bulk diesel prices have increased from ₹87.67 to ₹109.59 per litre

New panel formed to reform dental edu

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

IN a major reform aimed at improving the quality of dental education and aligning it with global standards, the Centre on Friday announced the constitution of the National Dental Commission (NDC). To support the functioning of the Commission, three autonomous bodies have also been constituted.

The Commission will introduce essential and long-overdue regulatory reforms in dental education, and enhance access to affordable oral healthcare across the country.

The notifications in this regard were issued on March 19.

The NDC framework will now replace the Dental Council of India (DCI), which regulated dental education and profession throughout the country. The new Commission has come into effect from March 19.

The Commission will frame regulations to implement the provisions of the Act; will conduct rating and assessment of dental institutions; evaluate human resources and promote dental research; frame guidelines for fee regulation in private dental colleges; and establish standards for community dental care, education, research, and professional ethics.

The three autonomous boards are — Undergraduate and Postgraduate Dental Education Board, which will oversee dental education; Dental Assessment and Rating Board, which will regulate accreditation and institutional assessment; and the Ethics and Dental Registration Board, which will govern professional conduct and registration of dentists.

Dr Sanjay Tewari has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Commission, while Dr. Mousumi Goswami will be a part-time member.

Dr Chandrashekhar Janakiram has been appointed president of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Dental Education Board. Dr. Shailesh Madhav Lele will be the whole time member. Lt Gen (Retd) Nanda Kishore Sahoo is the president of the Dental Assessment and Rating Board while Dr Himanshu Aeran is a whole time member.

Lt Gen (Retd) Tapas Kumar Bandyopadhyay has been appointed as the whole time member of the Ethics and Dental Registration Board.

CM has better work than to interfere with transfers, postings: K'taka HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court has said that no request for transfer or posting of government officials should be entertained by the Chief Minister's Office directly, observing that the CM has better and more important work to do than interfere with transfers and postings of government employees.

A divisional bench of Justices DK Singh and TM Nadaf made the observations recently, disposing of a writ appeal filed by Chethan S, a Bescom assistant engineer, working in the E4 sub-division of Whitefield division. He had moved the court questioning the single-judge order, which had dismissed his petition questioning the premature transfer without his content and also in violation of transfer guidelines.

The single judge observed that the court has come across several letters/orders/approvals issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), transferring group 'B' or 'C' employees undoing the orders issued by their superiors. "Even in the present case, the petitioner has managed to obtain the approval from the CMO directing the minister in-charge to accept the request of mutual transfer, though the same did not emanate from the office of respondent Nos. 1 and 2. Therefore, this generates a doubt as to whether the CM is aware of the kind of orders/approvals obtained from his office. It also gives rise to a suspicion that someone sitting in the CMO is mechanically issuing such orders/approvals giving rise to heart burn amongst employees and consequent litigation before this Court."

The single judge had directed the registrar general to place the order before the chief secretary to bring it to the notice of the CM to sensitise concerned persons not to casually issue letters for transfer, posting or retransferring of officials.

The chief secretary filed an affidavit on March 3, stating the notes received from the CMO are only recommendatory and not transfer orders or approval for transfers. She said the observation made in the impugned judgment has been brought to the notice of the CM. Office Staff/Officers CMO associated with the handling of such transfer requests have been specifically sensitised regarding the observations made, she added. **CONTINUED ON: P7**

Payyu Chowti coming out of the well with two-year-old Bhuvi in Sirsi

Bizman rescues 2-year-old girl from 50-ft well

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS
@ Sirsi (Uttara Kannada)

A two-year-old girl, who fell into an open well near her house, was rescued by her neighbour, businessman and philanthropist at Kasturba Nagar in Sirsi on Wednesday. The video of the rescue act has gone viral on social media sites.

The two-year-old Bhuvi was playing near her house when she fell into the well, but no one noticed it. Her elder sister and grandmother Jayamma were at home, but were busy, while her parents were away at a hospital.

The grandmother wanted to feed Bhuvi when she realised that the little girl was missing. She called out her name, but there was no response. Panicking, Jayamma sought the help of her neighbours and started searching for her. Just then, someone in the group heard a faint cry of the girl. **P5**

Trainee vet dies in hippo attack at S'mogga zoo

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Shivamogga

A trainee veterinarian on duty at the Tyavarekoppa Tiger and Lion Sanctuary died on Friday after she was attacked by a hippopotamus at the zoo.

The deceased, **Dr Samiksha Reddy** (27), was a resident of Bannerghatta in Bengaluru and had completed her education at the Veterinary College, Hebbal, Bengaluru. She had reported to duty as a trainee veterinarian on February 1.

Around 10.30 pm on Thursday, Samiksha had gone to the zoo hospital to treat a Sun conure bird. Around 11:45 pm, she went to check the hippopotamus, which had not consumed food properly at night. The hippopotamus is pregnant and is expected to give birth within four days. Samiksha entered the enclosure and was taking the hippo's body temperature using a thermal camera, when it attacked her.

A seriously injured Samiksha was rushed to a private hospital in the city, where she died on Friday morning, the executive director of Shivamogga zoo stated in a press release.

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre ordered a high-level investigation to be conducted by senior veterinarians and forest officials. The report is expected to be filed within seven days. He ordered a compensation of Rs 30 lakh to Dr Samiksha's family as per rules.

"This is an unfortunate incident. Every life is precious. The government will stand by the family of the deceased doctor," he stated in his condolence message.

He directed the authorities at all zoos in the state to adhere to the standard operating procedure while treating animals.

The incident raised several questions, while her family members questioned as to why she was sent to the hippo enclosure alone. **CONTINUED ON: P6**

CJI recuses from hearing plea on panel to pick CEC

UDAYAN KISHORE @ New Delhi

CHIEF Justice of India Surya Kant on Friday recused himself from hearing a batch of petitions challenging a 2023 law that removed the CJI from a committee mandated to appoint the chief election commissioner to the poll panel, citing "conflict of interest".

The court was hearing a batch of PILs challenging the constitutional validity of certain provisions of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act. The CJI said it would be appropriate for the case to be listed before a bench where no judge was in line to become the chief justice. Else, "I will be accused of conflict of interest," the CJI said.

The December 2023 law came months after a SC order that a panel comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the CJI appoint election commissioners. The bench had said the system would remain in force till a law was enacted. Under the 2023 Act, however, the selection committee consists of the PM, a Union minister nominated by the PM and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

EXPRESS READ

Custodial death sparks row in Tumakuru

Tumakuru: Tension prevailed in Huliyar town after a man died in police custody on Thursday night. Residents, including family members of the victim, laid siege to the police station, alleging police excesses | P3

Teen dies while filming Insta reel in Hubballi

Dharwad: Namish Sanglad (15) of Hubballi died after being run over by a car while filming stunts for Instagram reels on Thursday. Sources said the car was moving at a high speed when Namish attempted to cross its path | P6

STANDS FOR LAUDABLE ALLY

Envoy-designate has Chinese name, Wei Jiameng

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA @ Beijing

INDIA'S newly appointed Ambassador to China Vikram Doraiswami has a Chinese name: Wei Jiameng, which denotes auspicious or praiseworthy ally. Doraiswami, a 1992-batch IFS officer, was appointed India's new envoy to China on Thursday.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a media briefing on Friday that he noticed that the Indian envoy has chosen a Chinese name for himself: Wei Jiameng.

"China welcomes India's new ambassador to China Wei Jiameng, and stands ready to provide every convenience for him to take up his post in China," he said.

Vikram Doraiswami

According to Chinese scholars, the loose translation of the name in Mandarin is Wei, a common Chinese surname that phonetically matches "Vi" in Vikram. Long ago, Wei was a powerful state during the Warring States period in Chinese history. "Jia" stands for "auspicious or praiseworthy", "Meng" means "alliance". Broadly, Jiameng means auspicious/praiseworthy ally, the scholars said.

It can be said as "one who forms an excellent alliance", according to one Chinese scholar, which carries diplomatic significance in the present context of India-China relations.

Lin said China hopes that after assuming his duties, Doraiswami will make positive contributions to the sustained improvement and development of China-India ties.

Doraiswami's appointment evoked considerable interest in the Chinese official media and the strategic community. A Mandarin speaker, he served both in Hong Kong and Beijing in his early career as a diplomat. He served as Third Secretary in Hong Kong, where he earned an elective diploma in Chinese from the New Asia Yale-in-Asia Language School before moving to Beijing in 1996 for a four-year tenure.